

CANDIDATE FY2011 CMAQ AND RSTP PROJECTS

DASH Bus Acquisition

In order that transit companies remain in a state of good repair, it must replace its buses after their useful life has been reached. Further, additional buses must be acquired to address overcrowding issues on existing routes and to serve new transit markets.

According to the FY2009 Approved CIP, DASH needs \$2.685 million a year to replace its existing fleet. DASH would also like to acquire additional vehicles at \$500,000-\$600,000/bus to relieve overcrowding on existing routes and to start new routes. Since the City does not have the funds now to replace, let alone expand, transit services, it has been relying upon Commonwealth Urban funds to provide for this need. After the FY2010 allocation, the Commonwealth will stop providing Urban Funding. Thus, we have to look for other funding options.

Another funding option is obtaining federal money to buy buses. Until this time, the City has not accepted federal money for buying buses, since these funds typically come from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and if they give money to transit agencies, those agencies have to comply with FTA requirements. These can be costly and can limit service options. The City will be analyzing if this option should be pursued. Since RSTP funds are under the basic jurisdiction of the Federal Highway Administration, it was thought that the City of Alexandria might be able to receive RSTP funds for DASH purchases, without the funds being flexed to FTA.

In discussing this with the Director of the Commonwealth's Department of Rail and Public Transportation, it appears that it is possible that RSTP funding could be flexed to purchase buses without going through the Federal Transit Administration, if the Federal Highway Administration agrees. We are pursuing this option. If we can do it, the City could use \$3,000,000 to replace 5-6 DASH buses.

Preliminary Engineering of Exclusive Transitway Improvements

The City of Alexandria adopted a new version of the transportation element of the City's master plan in the fall of 2007. One of the key recommendations in the plan is to study and implement exclusive transitways in three key travel corridors in the City. If implemented, transitways will enable transit vehicles on them to travel faster than general purpose roadway lanes, thus making concepts like bus rapid transit more attractive to transit users in the City.

The City reprogrammed \$500,000 of RSTP funds from FY 2006 to do an initial detailed feasibility study of this proposal. In FY 2009 the City was provided with an additional \$800,000 of planning and preliminary engineering funds to implement some of the previous study's recommendations. In FY2010 the City received \$100,000 to continue the preliminary engineering started in the previous study. The City would like to request \$600,000 for this project in FY2011.

Transportation Demand Management Advancement

The Alexandria Rideshare program was established in 1984 to promote carpooling and vanpooling to reduce energy consumption and improve air quality. The program has evolved over the years from promoting carpooling and vanpooling into a complete Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program, promoting all non-drive-alone modes of transportation. These modes and numerous support programs are promoted to a wide array of audiences including residents, businesses, commuters, and visitors.

The Office of Transit Services writes, publishes, and distributes rideshare/TDM program information via electronic and non-electronic formats. Information includes education about using transportation alternatives, event advertising, program updates and initiatives, and transportation news and notices. The means by which information is disseminated includes a monthly e-mail to subscribers, maintenance of a program web site, a quarterly newsletter, and flyers. The Transit Services Office is continually improving the delivery of these services, and ascertaining their effectiveness. The Office has recently re-branded the program the "Local Motion" program and has had an extensive amount of outreach activity, including many new interfaces using the internet. As part of its continuing effort to fine tune this program, the Transit Services Office is about to embark on an effort to develop a Transportation Demand Management Plan for the city in FY 2010. It will determine policy goals for the program, and determine how effective the program is in meeting the goals. These will result in policy recommendations which will start to be implemented in FY2010.

Previously, the City has engaged in a number of analyses to determine the effectiveness of its TDM programs. Here are a few examples:

Between August 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006, the City engaged in a rigorous trial of various TDM techniques. One was to directly call people living adjacent to DASH Route AT10 and to provide them with free passes to use DASH. All people who used the passes stated that they would use DASH again. From August, 2006 through March 2007, average daily ridership on the route increased 17% from 369 to 457 passengers per day. Also as part of this research effort, it was found that of various companies who were assisted by the City in implementing a transit benefit program, 59% would not have done so without City assistance and 41% are still providing the transit benefit to their employees. Finally, the Office of Transit Services provides an initial incentive to encourage people to carshare. Surveys we have conducted after the incentive was given indicate that 48% of those who participate in the program have fewer vehicles now due to the carshare program. Since Alexandria has a 45% population turnover every five years, it is important for us to gauge our program's effectiveness and adjust it accordingly. This project will use this information as well as additional analyses to be done as part of the TDM Plan to develop courses of action for the City.

This request is to provide continuing funding funds for Transportation Demand Management activities. Previous funding for these activities includes \$250,000 for Ridesharing Enhancement in FY 2007, \$400,000 for Alternative Transportation

Promotion in FY 2008, and \$300,000 for Transportation Demand Management Analysis and Initiatives in FY 2009. In FY2010, the City received \$150,000 to continue this work. We would propose that we request \$300,000 for this activity.

Bicycle Parking at Major Transit Stops (\$500,000)

According to recent data, bicycle-to-work trips in Alexandria have dramatically increased in recent years, with a bicycle mode share now nearly five times the national average. However, bicycling has not been well integrated into the city's transit system – particularly with respect to safe, secure bicycle parking. This project would improve integration of bicycling and transit by improving bicycle parking at Alexandria's Metrorail stops, including a bike station (secure, indoor bicycle parking with bike rental, commuter and mechanical assistance) into the existing Old Town Transit Shop at the King Street Metro. This program would be coordinated with WMATA's regional initiative to improve bicycle access and would encourage regional commuters to use bicycles once they arrive in Alexandria.

Bicycle Sharing Initiative (\$500,000)

Bicycling is a practical, cost-effective and efficient way to move through Old Town and Carlyle/East Eisenhower areas of Alexandria which are both compact, transit-accessible areas of mixed use development with many low-speed streets and existing on- and off-street bicycle facilities and parking. While the City is making improvements on many fronts to encourage more sustainable transportation choices, one major goal in the City's new Transportation Master Plan and the approved Eco-City Action Plan is to implement a bicycle sharing program. Bike sharing programs aim to provide short-term bicycle rental from unattended urban locations, particularly those near transit stops. The City's primary objective for a Bicycle Sharing Initiative would be to partner with existing, funded initiatives in the District of Columbia (SmartBike DC) and Arlington County to develop a regional program. In Alexandria, the program could have more than 10 locations in Old Town and Carlyle for bike sharing stations, to accommodate as many as 500 bikes.

Holmes Run Pedestrian/Bicycle Tunnel Construction, Phase II

The three-mile Holmes Run greenway is one of the most heavily used non-roadway transportation corridors in the City of Alexandria. This linear park provides a key off-road bicycle and pedestrian connection from the high density residential and retail centers on the West End to the Eisenhower Valley and is a major connector to bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Fairfax County and Old Town Alexandria.

The trail provides access under Interstate 395 and Van Dorn Street via two tunnels. These tunnels were originally service tunnels and have only recently been adapted for use by bicyclists and pedestrians. However, the tunnels are in a serious state of disrepair.

During periods of heavy rains, the tunnels flood, ruining the lighting and depositing sediment and debris onto the fair weather crossing of Holmes Run. Seepage from adjoining concrete embankments creates water hazards. The tunnels are extremely small, presenting both real and perceived safety hazards for users and vandalism is common.

In 2007, the City of Alexandria began work on a \$250,000 RSTP allocation to perform an engineering study of the tunnels to investigate ways to address ongoing maintenance, security and make general safety improvements for bicyclists and pedestrians. Originally \$260,000 was allocated in a FY 2008 allocation for this project. This allocation was subsequently withdrawn to balance the actual amount of money allocated for northern Virginia. The City has been notified that these withdrawn funds will be restored in FY 2008 after this allocation is approved by the NVTA. This money will provide follow up funding to the engineering (RSTP) allocation and allow the City to make physical improvements to these key regional connectors. This project received no funds in FY2010. The proposal for \$500,000 of FY 2011 RSTP or CMAQ funds will supplement the previous allocations.

Eisenhower Platform Extension

The Eisenhower East area of Alexandria recently has begun to transform itself into a new town within a town. This has been occasioned by the Patent and Trademark Office's move between the King Street and Eisenhower Metro stations in 2004. This addition of a major source of employment in this portion of the City has spun off extensive amounts of development in the area near the Eisenhower Metro Station. The latest ridership estimates show that the station will grow from handling approximately 4,000 trips per day to over 10,000 trips per day. Since much of this activity is north of Eisenhower Avenue, and the current Metro station is south of this roadway, the addition of another station entrance north of Eisenhower Avenue is required to minimize the number of conflicts between pedestrians using the station and motor vehicles.

The City has previously received \$3.6 million from FTA Section 5309 funds and matching Commonwealth funds for this project. This project is estimated to cost \$20,000,000.

Braddock Road Metro Pedestrian Connections

The Braddock Metro Neighborhood Plan emphasizes the importance of the Braddock Metro station to improving the mobility options for residents but identifies several barriers to pedestrian access to the station. These barriers include the Metro tracks themselves, which limits access from the north and northwest to the Braddock Road underpass, and the Braddock Place development, which blocks access from the northeast. The purpose of these two studies is to determine the feasibility of, and design, options for improving access from these directions.